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House Conservatives Say Balanced Budget is Within Reach *Praise Bush for Accountability Initiative*

WASHINGTON – U.S. Congressman John Shadegg, Chairman of the Republican Study Committee (RSC), an organization of more than seventy House conservatives, today indicated that conservatives in Congress including the RSC members support the President's budget proposal which would result in a deficit created by a true economic stimulus plan. However, if a real economic stimulus plan cannot be enacted as a result of objections by the Senate Democratic leadership, then Congress can and should balance the budget for fiscal year 2003.

Moreover, Shadegg complimented President Bush and Office of Management and Budget Director Mitch Daniels for providing a budget that governs with accountability. Shadegg and the RSC enthusiastically endorse the effort to link budgetary increases to specific performance criteria. The budget accountability, coined "performance-based budgeting" by the Administration, will be an excellent tool to separate the effective programs from the ineffective programs.

"We are 100 percent behind the efforts to enact a real economic stimulus bill. However, the President and the House are only two corners to the stimulus triangle. Mr. Daschle and his Senate Democrats sit in the third corner and there is little indication that they want to pass the economic stimulus outlined in this budget," said Shadegg.

In light of the Senate leadership's stimulus indifference, Shadegg and the RSC maintain that the \$77 billion proposed for economic stimulus in the President's budget should not be left on the table to be spent on other programs.

"If we leave that money in the budget it will result in a deficit, not because we did what we could stimulate the economy, but because failing that, Congress again increased spending with pork barrel projects," Shadegg said.

The White House's budget numbers indicate that if you remove the \$77 billion allocated for the stimulus bill, then the federal budget would be less than four billion into the red. Using the Administration's "performance-based budgeting" strategy to eliminate government waste and abuse, the RSC believes we must find offsets for these deficits and keep the government in the black. Shadegg noted that this shortfall would account for only one-tenth of one percent of the President's \$2.13 trillion budget.

"If the powers that be block a stimulus bill then a balanced budget is within reach. It should be the goal of a fiscally responsible Congress to find a way to balance this budget," said Shadegg.

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